What is claimed is:

1. A method for the treatment of arthritis comprising administering to a subject suffering from arthritis a composition comprising a function blocking antibody or a fragment of said antibody, capable of binding an epitope of VLA-1 wherein the epitope comprises amino acid residues 92-97 of Figure 15, and in an amount effective to provide a decrease in arthritic score of about 65% or greater when compared to a control antibody treated subject.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the decrease in arthritic score is about 79% or greater.

3. A method according to claim 1 wherein the decrease in arthritic score is about 85% or greater.

4. A method according to claim 1 wherein the decrease in arthritic score is about 90% or greater.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the antibody is monoclonal.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the subject is a human.

7. The method according to claim 1 wherein the subject suffers from rheumatoid arthritis.